



MITCHELL E. DANIELS, Jr., Governor
STATE OF INDIANA

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY JOSEPH E. WAINSCOTT, JR., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*Indiana Department of Homeland Security
Indiana Government Center South
302 West Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204
317-232-3980*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 19, 2008

Hoosiers Reminded of Fire Safety During Power Outages

INDIANAPOLIS – The Indiana Department of Homeland Security and the Indiana State Fire Marshal reminds Hoosiers to be cautious during power outages to avoid fires. By following the safety tips below, citizens can protect themselves, their family and home from the potential threat of fire during or after a storm.

Chemical Safety

- Look for combustible liquids like gasoline, lighter fluid, and paint thinner that may have spilled. Thoroughly clean the spill and place containers in a well-ventilated area.
- Keep combustible liquids away from heat sources.

Electrical Safety

- Turn off or disconnect all appliances when there is an outage. When the power is restored, turn them on, one by one, to prevent an overload.
- Shut off or disconnect all major equipment, as well as the heating or air conditioning system that might be in operation at the time of outage.
- Unplug sensitive electronic equipment. When power is restored, use surge protectors to protect computers, fax machines, answering machines, televisions, stereos and appliances.
- If your home has sustained flood or water damage, and you can safely get to the main breaker or fuse box, turn off the power.
- Assume all wires on the ground are electrically charged. This includes cable TV feeds.
- Be aware of and avoid downed utility lines. Report downed or damaged power lines to the utility company or emergency services.
- Remove standing water, wet carpets and furnishings. Air dry your home with good ventilation before restoring power.
- Do not use extension cords between homes or across yards or streets. Such use could cause electrocution and fire.
- Have a licensed electrician check your home for damage.

Gas Safety

- Smell and listen for leaky gas connections. If you believe there is a gas leak, immediately leave the house and leave the door(s) open and do not turn switches on or off, leave them as they are.
- Never strike a match. Any size flame can spark an explosion.
- Before turning the gas back on, have the gas system checked by a professional.

Generator Safety

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions and guidelines when using generators.
- Use a generator or other fuel-powered machine outside the home. Carbon monoxide fumes are odorless and can quickly overwhelm you indoors.
- Use the appropriate size and type power cords to carry the electric load. Overloaded cords can overheat and cause fires.
- Never run cords under rugs or carpets where heat might build up or damage to a cord may go unnoticed.
- Never connect generators to another power source such as power lines. The reverse flow of electricity or "backfeed" can electrocute an unsuspecting utility worker.

And Remember...

- Be careful when using candles. Keep the flame away from combustible objects and out of the reach of children.
- Some smoke alarms may be dependent on your home's electrical service and could be inoperative during a power outage. Check to see if your smoke alarm uses a back-up battery and install a new battery at least once a year.
- Smoke alarms should be installed on every level of your home.
- If there is a fire hydrant near your home, keep it clear of debris for easy access by the fire department.

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Contact

John Erickson, 317.690.4698, jerickson@dhs.in.gov

Rachel Meyer, 317.607.8476, rmeyer@dhs.in.gov